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Interaction between the roller and inclined surfaces 53 moves the bolt member vertically between the closed operative position shown in Figs. 2, 4 and the open operative position shown in Figures 3 and 5.

Movement of the bolt member upward from the open position shown in Figures 3 and 5 to the closed position shown in Figures 2 and 4 causes finger portions 70 of the bolt to engage a striker mechanism 72 which is shown in Figure 6 of Mercer. The striker mechanism includes a pin 86 supporting a striker 88 which is pivotal from an open position (Figure 5) to a closed position (Figure 6). The striker 88 is engaged by the finger portions when the bolt is moved into a closed operative position. This causes the striker 88 to pivot downward through an aperture 92 in a wall portion 84. A spring 94 having one end connected to member 80 and the other end connected to the striker 88 normally positions the striker 88 in the open operative position shown in Figure 5. Thus, no slidable contact exists between the handle and the striker 88.

Claim 1 recites a latch assembly for coupling a door to an apparatus, wherein the latch assembly includes "a keeper comprising a biasing member and a head portion extending from said biasing member, said head portion comprising a catch and a lock release projection, said biasing member configured to bias said catch for engagement with the door; a handle comprising a contact surface in slidable contact with said lock release projection, said handle selectively operable to uncouple the door from the apparatus; a handle retainer coupling said handle to the door; and a handle hinge pin, said handle hinge pin coupling said handle to said handle retainer."

Mercer neither describes nor suggests a latch assembly including a keeper including a biasing member and a head portion extending from the biasing member, the head portion comprising a catch and a lock release projection, the biasing member configured to bias the catch for engagement with the door, a handle including a contact surface in slidable contact with the lock release projection, the handle selectively operable to uncouple the door from the apparatus, a handle retainer coupling the handle to the door, and a handle hinge pin, the handle hinge pin coupling the handle to the handle retainer. Moreover, Mercer neither describes nor suggests a handle including a contact surface in slidable contact with a lock release projection. Rather, Mercer describes the horizontal movement of the handle which

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translates to horizontal movement of the slide that results in vertical movement of the bolt member, wherein the vertical movement of the bolt member indirectly relates to the pivoting of the striker. For at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Mercer.

Claims 5 and 8 depend from Claim 1, and when the recitations of Claims 5 and 8 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Claims 5 and 8 are likewise submitted to be patentable over Mercer.

Claim 20 recites a latch assembly for coupling a door to an apparatus, wherein the latch assembly includes "a keeper comprising a biasing member and a head portion extending from said biasing member, said head portion comprising a catch and a lock release projection, said biasing member configured to bias said catch for engagement with the door, said keeper head portion further comprising a switch actuator; a handle comprising a contact surface in slidable contact with said lock release projection, said handle selectively operable to uncouple the door from the tub assembly; and a handle retainer coupling said handle to the door."

Mercer neither describes nor suggests a latch assembly for coupling a door to an apparatus, wherein the latch assembly includes a keeper including a biasing member and a head portion extending from the biasing member, the head portion comprising a catch and a lock release projection, the biasing member configured to bias the catch for engagement with the door, the keeper head portion further comprising a switch actuator, a handle comprising a contact surface in slidable contact with the lock release projection, the handle selectively operable to uncouple the door from the tub assembly, and a handle retainer coupling the handle to the door. Moreover, Mercer neither describes nor suggests a handle comprising a contact surface in slidable contact with the lock release projection.

As stated above, Mercer neither describes nor suggests a handle comprising a contact surface in slidable contact with the lock release projection, and consequently Mercer neither describes nor suggests the latch assembly of Claim 20. Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 20 is patentable over Mercer

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Claim 7 depends from Claim 20, and when the recitations of Claim 7 is considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Claim 7 is likewise submitted to be patentable over Mercer.

Claim 22 recites a latch assembly for coupling a door to an apparatus, the latch assembly including "a keeper comprising a biasing member and a head portion extending from said biasing member, said head portion comprising a catch and a lock release projection, said biasing member configured to bias said catch for engagement with the door; a rotatably mounted handle comprising a contact surface in slidable contact with said lock release projection, said handle selectively rotatable to uncouple the door from the apparatus; and a handle retainer coupling said handle to the door."

Mercer neither describes nor suggests a latch assembly for coupling a door to an apparatus, the latch assembly including a keeper including a biasing member and a head portion extending from the biasing member, the head portion comprising a catch and a lock release projection, the biasing member configured to bias the catch for engagement with the door, a rotatably mounted handle comprising a contact surface in slidable contact with the lock release projection, the handle selectively rotatable to uncouple the door from the apparatus, and a handle retainer coupling the handle to the door. Moreover, Mercer neither describes nor suggests a rotatably mounted handle comprising a contact surface in slidable contact with the lock release projection as recited in the latch assembly of Claim 22. In addition, the handle of Mercer is manually moved horizontally from left to right to latch and unlatch the door. Mercer neither describes nor suggests a rotatably mounted handle. Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 22 is patentable over Mercer.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1, 5, 7, 8, 20 and 22 be withdrawn.

The objection to Claims 3, 4, 9, and 10 as being dependant upon rejected base claims is respectfully traversed.

Claims 3, 4, 9, and 10 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1, which for the reasons set forth above is submitted to be patentable over Mercer.

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For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to Claims 3, 4, 9, and 10 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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